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## Sesko remembered as a driven genius

Jul 02 2004



Bill Sesko was an idea guy, a collector. And, he was not afraid to fight City Hall.

After a bout with lung cancer, he died June 16, leaving his wife of 30 years Natacha to sort through and sell off his thousands of pounds of hoses, pipes, lamps, furniture, machines, lumbar, file cabinets and other odds and ends — the byproducts of years as an inventor and engineer.

Sesko fought with the City of Bremerton's Permitting department for years over his property rights.

Sesko had three patents to his name and argued that he could use his property, which is zoned commercial, to store materials he needed to make his creations.

City officials called his yard a junk lot, and wanted it cleaned up.

On two occasions, they won the battle, by cleaning up his property in 2001 and 2003.

"There's a lot of cool stuff in there," said his daughter Tanya, about a building on his property that stores a mother lode of various items. "Everything in there, no matter how wierd it was, he had a purpose for it."

A month before he died, Natacha sat by Sesko's hospital bed with a tape recorder and asked her husband to recount his fights over his property.

"The way the city has treated us has been so unfair," he said in a weaker, calmer voice, obviously exhausted with his fight against cancer. "The city has to act within guidelines and treat people equally."

He is remembered by his friends and wife as a stubborn, driven man.

"There was only one Bill," said his friend of 25 years Lynn Hastings. "He was just very firm. He walked to his own drummer. You can argue with him but you are wasting your time."

Adds his daughter, Tanya, "My dad was one of the most stubborn people I know. He was very firm on his beliefs of what was right and he did he best to convince you that his way was the right way."

After Sesko died, he was cremated, and on Sunday his wife went up in a twin-engine Cessna plane to drop his ashes over Mt. Rainier.

In a video film of the day, Sesko's friend and the pilot Jeff Dorsey said "Bill will be in the stratosphere today."

Everything about Sesko's life and his death was a little bit unique.

"When we got married he picked me up in his airplane," said Natacha.

Sesko loved to fly, and took his wife all over the country on flights in their Comanche two-seater.

A couple weeks before he died, Bill and Natacha had a long talk about death. "He told me he will not live through Friday," she recounted.

Natacha wanted him to come back and tell her if there was life after death. At first, he laughed and said it would be impossible to tell her.

"I said 'Bill, you're a genius, you can do anything,' " Natacha recounted.

They decided that if there was life after death he would come back one week after he died and turn the clocks forward one hour.

Natacha raced home to her house at the exact time a week after his death and all seven were turned forward.

She worried that people who hear that story will think she is crazy, but the funny thing is, Sesko didn't know how to operate her computer, and that was the one clock in the house that wasn't set back.

Sesko was known for his intelligence. A man that rarely cracked a smile in a conversation, his first career job was at the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard as a test engineer. Eventually he worked as a senior field engineer at NASA, and invented a ballast mechanism for submarines.

The last time the city came to clean up his property, they took the parts for his latest invention — a machine logger that walked rather than crawled along the forest floor — for low impact harvesting.

Up until his death, Sesko managed his over 100 acres of residential and commercial properties in Kitsap County.

“We’re probably going to have a huge garage sale of some sort,” Tanya said.

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